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(orig under Bush)*

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SUBJECT George Bush: A View on the SALT Treaty

ROBERT MACNEIL: Turning to one area where your career would have very specific relevance, with the SALT treaty coming up, there's been a lot of controversy over whether such a treaty could be verified. As a former Director of the CIA, do you believe it can be adequately verified?

GEORGE BUSH: My view is that our ability to monitor, and thus verify, has been severely diminished.

But look, I would wait and receive the testimony, as the Senate will do behind closed doors, and make a determination.

MACNEIL: Will you campaign...

BUSH: Maybe there's something happening there that I don't know about. I don't have access to the highly classified information for which, indeed, I was responsible before. So I want to see the Senate get all the information.

But when President Carter said at the time of the demise of Iran that our intelligence-collection capability had not been diminished -- he eventually changed it -- that was wrong. And when Turner says it's going to take a certain period of time before we can verify it, I think that needs to be fully discussed.

I am concerned, based on my own knowledge, frankly, very concerned.

MACNEIL: Do you see yourself possibly campaigning against ratification of a SALT treaty?

BUSH: I can't tell you that until I know what's in it.

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I hope I'm fair-minded enough to say, "I'm not going to take a position until I know what's in the treaty."

And let me say this: I did prepare the national intelligence estimates for a short period of time in this country's history, and I want to see a SALT treaty. But I don't want to see a bad treaty. And if the treaty can't be verified or locks in inequities or doesn't count a Backfire bomber or, on balance, if I conclude that it's not in our interest, I would not be intimidated by the President's view: you have to sign it, or else there's going to be a big arms race. I don't believe it.

If it's a good treaty, sign it. If it's a bad treaty, reject it.